



# EVIDENCE-BASED INTERVENTIONS TO ADDRESS INTERGENERATIONAL POVERTY

SOCIAL SERVICES APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE  
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ISSUE BRIEF

## **INTRODUCTION**

Intergenerational poverty is poverty in which two or more successive generations of a family continue in the cycle of poverty. The State of Utah measures intergenerational poverty (IGP) as utilization of public assistance for at least 12 months as an adult and at least 12 months as a child. Experiencing poverty as a child often predicts adulthood poverty, due to the behavioral, emotional, cognitive, and neurophysiological issues that childhood poverty can cause, and their collective impact on future wellbeing. Thus, interventions to break the cycle of IGP focus on child-based and family-based approaches, to improve childhood outcomes and thus reduce the likelihood of adulthood poverty.

*This brief is informational and does not include recommendations.*

## **FISCAL IMPLICATIONS OF IGP**

It is estimated that, in the United States, IGP has the following fiscal implications:

- \$170 billion per year in forgone productivity and earnings
- \$170 billion per year in increased cost of crime
- \$149 billion per year in increased healthcare expenditures (due to poor health, as well as early morbidity and mortality)
- Totals approximately 3.8% of annual gross domestic product (GDP)<sup>1</sup>

State-level costs related to IGP include increased expenditures for public assistance programs, public safety, and healthcare.

## **EFFECTS OF IGP ON CHILDREN**

Childhood poverty can have the following effects on children:

- Stressful social relationships and/or antisocial behavior
- Academic failure and poor educational outcomes
- Drug and alcohol use and abuse
- Depression
- High-risk sexual activity and teenage pregnancy
- Greater likelihood of children experiencing abuse or neglect
- Problems with neurodevelopment
- Poor health outcomes (prenatal/childhood/adolescence)<sup>2</sup>
- Increased risk of poverty in adulthood

## **EVIDENCE-BASED INTERVENTIONS**

- School-based programs
  - "...students from poor families who perceive a positive school environment can exhibit similar outcomes to their peers from higher income families."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Holzer, H.J., Schanzenbach, D.W., Duncan, G.J., and Ludwig, J. (2008). The economic costs of childhood poverty in the United States. *Journal of Children and Poverty*, 14(1).

<sup>2</sup> Van Ryzin, M.J., Fishbein, D., and Biglan, A. (2018). The promise of prevention science for addressing intergenerational poverty. *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law*, 24(1).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

- Curriculum-based programs are effective but have substantial financial and time costs.
- Programs integrated into instructional activities that promote prosocial behavior and social skills are also effective.
- Family-based programs
  - Provide education to families, improve quality of family relationships, teach key family management skills.
  - Change how parents manage and monitor child behavior, how family negotiates conflicts and solves problems.
  - Results: prevent or reduce child externalizing and disruptive behavior, attention deficit/hyperactivity, oppositional defiant disorder, delinquency, violence, substance abuse, depression/anxiety, HIV risk
  - Cost effective
    - Parent Management Training- Oregon
      - \$5,108 in lifetime benefits compared to \$650 total cost per family<sup>4</sup>
    - Strengthening Families for Parents and Youth 10-14
      - \$4,126 in lifetime benefits compared to \$850 total cost per family<sup>5</sup>
    - Other benefits- future labor market earnings, reduce societal costs for crime and health care
- Maternal and child health-based programs
  - Programs to improve maternal and child health lead to improved child health outcomes, which affect educational attainment and future labor market earnings
    - Health insurance
    - Family planning services
    - WIC/food supplementation programs/food stamps
    - Nurse home visits to poor, unmarried young women during pregnancy and first two years
- Two-generation programs (see graphic on page 4)
  - Simultaneously address needs of parents and children
    - Pairing higher education and workforce programs with child care or early education programs
  - Outcomes measured for entire family, as opposed to just for adults or just for children
    - Integrated data system
  - Examples
    - Jeremiah Program combines early childhood education with housing and life-skills training for single mothers; return on investment of \$4 in societal benefits for every \$1 spent<sup>6</sup>
      - Reduced dependence on public assistance, increased taxable earnings
    - Colorado Parent Employment Project pairs noncustodial parents with job training, parenting classes, and child support case management
      - Increases in employment, increases in participants' child support payments

<sup>4</sup> Van Ryzin, M.J., Fishbein, D., and Biglan, A. (2018). The promise of prevention science for addressing intergenerational poverty. *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law*, 24(1).

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> National Conference of State Legislatures. (2018). Two-Generation Approaches to Addressing Poverty: A Toolkit for State Legislators.

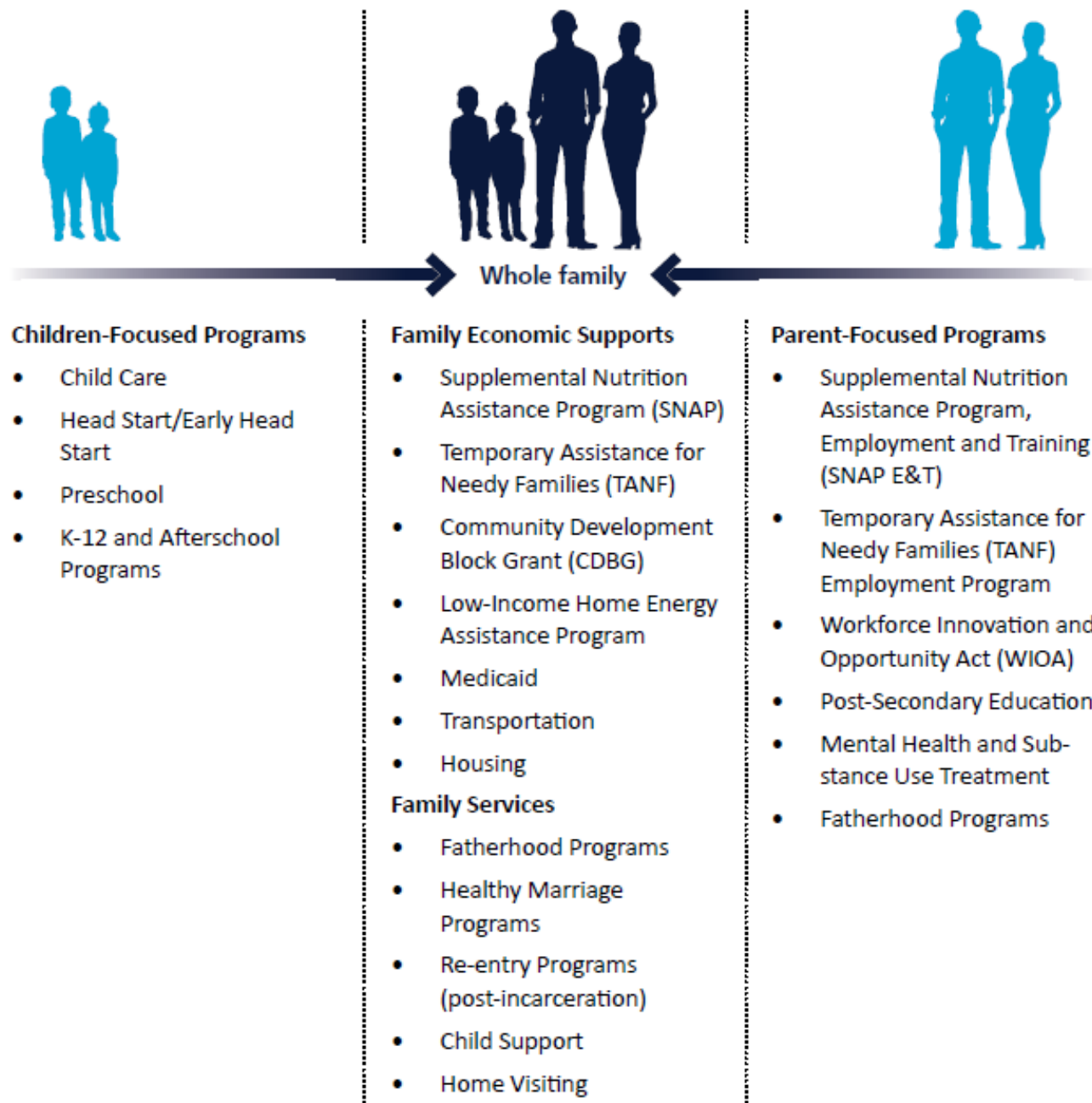
**IGP IN UTAH**

- In 2016, 39,376 adults and 59,579 children experienced IGP. San Juan County has the highest rate of IGP; other high-rate counties are listed in the chart below.
- The Department of Workforce Services funds school-based intervention programs across the state, including afterschool programs, extended-day kindergarten, high-quality preschool, home visiting, preschool, and school behavioral health.
- DWS also established the Youth Eligibility Success program in 2017 to help connect youth (16-18 years old) experiencing IGP with workforce development services.
- Other current efforts coordinated by the Utah Intergenerational Welfare Reform Commission include: coordination of case management and data sharing between DHS, DOH, and DWS; training DWS staff to make referrals to community-based organizations; and working to incorporate family-centered approaches in service delivery.
- The Utah Education Policy Center (UEPC) conducted an evaluation of school-based IGP programs initiated by 2014 S.B. 43 and their effect on students’ standardized test scores. Programs had to provide academic support and developmental enrichment for students affected by IGP, and provide support for families. Between 2014 and 2017, the programs served 9,475 unique students. Participants increased their average standardized test scores in English/Language Arts (5.7 points), Math (3.2 points), and Science (2.3 points). The effects increased for each year that students participated in IGP programs.

San Juan	34%
Carbon	17%
Grand	16%
Duchesne	15%
Sevier	15%

Source: Department of Workforce Services

## The Two-Generation Continuum



Source: National Conference of State Legislatures